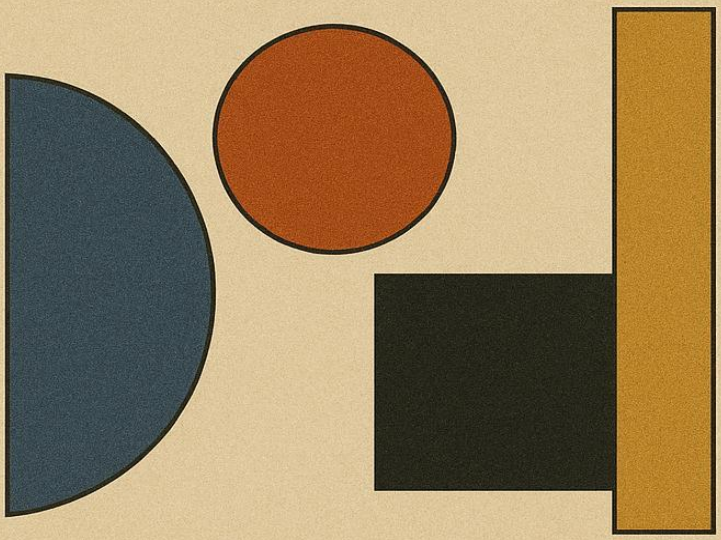
MEN, CORPORALS AND ONLYFANS



ALBA PRATALIA

MEN, CORPORALS AND ONLYFANS

His head was meant to keep the ears apart, nothing more. A bony clothes-hanger for cartilage. He was the kind of man who'd scratch his left ear with his right hand from behind his head, as if auditioning for the role of *Primate Reverting to Primal*. The kind of man who stirred a glass of tap water before drinking it—just in case it had settled.

He'd Purell a USB stick because it "had a virus."
He'd enter a roundabout and look right, satisfied he'd performed *road safety.*
He once invested in a male and female mule, certain he'd be cornering the market on baby donkeys.

When a frying pan caught fire, he marched in with a jug of water, wearing oven mitts like armor, and created a kitchen flamethrower that scorched the ceiling into modern art.

Neighbors knew him as "that man." The sort of man who'd microwave salad because it was "too cold." The sort who set the alarm clock two hours earlier so he could "get used to the idea of waking up."

He lived permanently in the uncanny valley between confidence and catastrophe, striding through life like a walking warning label.

And that's the reason why, surrounded by men like that—head-stirrers, USB-Purellers, mule-breeders—Nathan thought Kurt Cobain had nailed it. Suck on the barrel of a shotgun, pull the trigger, exit stage left. Hemingway, same prescription, different caliber. Anna Karenina,

had she been more than paper and ink, at least had the dignity of a train to resolve the issue.

Because here's the truth: these men, these oxygen-thieves, are tireless. They repeat. And repeat. And repeat. And repeat their moronity until the others—exhausted, disarmed, patience surgically removed—just let them win that one. And so, with time, they win all of them. They're not men. They're corporals.

You see, humanity is divided into two species. Not rich and poor. Not saints and sinners. Men and corporals.

Men: the beasts of burden, lashed to work, condemned to shovel coal into the engines of a train they'll never ride. Their whole lives in shadow, satisfaction a rumor, sunlight a rumor's rumor.

Corporals: those pimps of power, the exploiters, the tyrants, the ones who humiliate and sneer. Always on top, floating like scum on soup, without merit, without talent, without intelligence. Just a brass face polished by arrogance, a voice always louder than yours, a hand always ready to push your head under.

And listen carefully, Doctor, because this is the diagnosis: a corporal is born, not made. They may come in tweed jackets or oil-stained overalls, in Wall Street ties or factory boots—it doesn't matter. Strip them naked and you'll still see it: same face, same grin, same mannerisms. Identical. They are a species unto themselves.

Men.
And corporals.

And if you can't tell who's who, well—guess which one you are.

Nathan was thinking all this—men and corporals, Cobain and trains—while recording his last Instagram promotional video.

The setup: Nathan in front of the camera, haloed by a rented ring light. Inspiring stock music, the kind that makes you want to buy scented candles or sign up for a yoga retreat in Bali. His voice: angelic, syrup dripping, smile plastered from molar to molar.

"Do you like to smell good, but you don't want to spend hundreds of bucks in perfumes? My homemade trick will blow your mind!"

The music cuts.
His face drops like a guillotine.
Straight stare into the camera. Dead eyes.

"I shower. Try it sometime."

He raises a middle finger, casual as lighting a cigarette.

Click. Video off.
Click. Upload.
The interface mocks him with cheer:
"Uploading your video…"
BING. *Your video is online.*

And somewhere, as the algorithm does its thing, some corporate corporal in a polyester suit gets ready to monetize Nathan's disgust into clicks, likes, and deodorant ads.

Then Nathan went to shower. Like any respectable prophet of disgust, he brought with him not a towel but a neatly ironed fortress of freshly laundered clothes—shirts folded with military precision, trousers sharp enough to slice bread, socks matched in holy matrimony.

He stacked them by the shower door like ammunition.

He stripped, set up the OnlyFans camera (tripod balanced on the toilet tank, duct tape holding the lens at a 17-degree "artistic" tilt), and stepped under the stream. Steam rose. He scrubbed, lathered, exfoliated, a baptism in hot water.

Then came the reveal.
The water shut off. The fog parted.
And from the mist there emerged the naked, shuddering horror of Nathan's true form—birthday suit, no edits, no filters, nothing but raw cosmic repugnance.

The *bling!s* detonated instantly.
DING. DING. DING. Like a slot machine stuck on jackpot.

The fans were paying, not for more skin, not for less clothing, but for salvation: *for him to put something—anything—back on.* His nakedness wasn't just physical; it was metaphysical. A horror so obscene it vibrated through drywall, seeped into the bones of children three streets over. Dogs whimpered. Wi-Fi lagged. The world tilted.

And yet the subscribers kept paying. Not voyeurs, but guardians. Fathers of three. Mothers of five. Responsible adults, accountants, librarians, substitute teachers, all donating to keep humanity safe from the naked truth of Nathan. (And yes, a Catholic priest or two, but of course, because if there's a niche, they're already in it.)

For every *bling!* a piece of clothing was donned:

- Shirt. *Bling!*
- Pants. *Bling!*
- Socks. *Bling!*
- Gloves. *Bling!*
- Balaclava. *Bling!*
- Ski goggles. *Final Bling!*

And when the last pixel of flesh was hidden, when Nathan stood there like a terrorist of fashion—steam dripping, bundled tighter than an Antarctic explorer—the *blings* faded into silence.

Humanity could breathe again.

And so, between the Instagram ad ("Shower, you filth pigs") and the OnlyFans charity-strip ("Please God, cover that body"), the monthly rent and bills had been paid. Nathan could at

last return to his real vocation: drinking himself into oblivion with style.

Not fully naked, mind you. This wasn't Mardi Gras. This was a dignified **Kalsarikännit**—that sacred Finnish ritual of drinking alone in your underwear. The balance point between personal freedom and public safety. Clothes half-on, half-off, the way the Norse gods surely intended.

Because Nathan respected the neighborhood dogs. They had already suffered enough, their canine souls bent sideways like a bad ultrasound every time he walked from the shower to the fridge without a barrier of cotton. Dogs see the world in black and white, but Nathan's nudity introduced a third color: *trauma beige*.

Children, though—he despised them all. Little snot-goblins, grubby-fingered hobbits in sneakers. All except maybe one or two in the neighborhood, the rare tolerable specimen who wasn't sticky or screaming. For those two, and those two only, Nathan consented to keep the balaclava and boxers on, sparing them a lifetime of Freudian detours.

Glass in hand, underwear clinging, he sat in quiet triumph.
Paid rent. Paid bills. Paid off society with his covered shame.

Now—time to drink until tomorrow looked like yesterday, and yesterday looked like the good old days.

Those two children from the neighborhood—the only ones spared from Nathan's private wish of incineration in an Australian wildfire—

had once approached him with a request. Not for candy, not for Pokémon cards, not for Wi-Fi passwords. No.

"Mister Nathan, can you buy us some beer?"

One was eight. The other, at most, ten. Their voices still squeaked, their legs were still skinny reeds, but their eyes had already learned despair. Nathan looked at them the way a grizzled soldier looks at young recruits: *too young, but at least they get it.*

He respected that. He admired that. At such a young age, they had pierced through the cardboard cutouts of childhood, the idiotic propaganda of "fun" and "innocence," and arrived at the only sane conclusion: **life requires lubrication.**

So he marched them to the corner store. Beer, of course, a six-pack each—training wheels.

And, as a mark of honor, he added a complementary quarter pint of bourbon. *"Congratulations, children,"* he muttered, passing them the brown bag like a Mafia don blessing his successors. *"You've understood life. Don't let it trick you otherwise."*

And for a moment—just a flicker—he thought maybe these kids would grow up not as corporals, but as men. Tired, doomed, but aware. And awareness, Nathan figured, was worth a toast.

The corporal is probably better known by his folk name: the Son-of-a-Bitch.

His main occupation is not his job, not his career, not even his survival. No—what busies and animates him most is **others.** Other people's time, other people's choices, other people's moods. And above all, nothing

corrodes him more than seeing someone who isn't corroded. His lungs fill with rage when yours fill with air. His heart races when yours dares to relax. His second distinguishing trait, therefore, is simple: *he cannot forgive carefree*.

There are two great branches in the genus of the Son-of-a-Bitch: those born to **do**, and those born to **not let do**.

The *doers* are the ones forever building, hammering, organizing, producing noise and schedules and calendars—every action designed not to build happiness but to crush serenity under weight of "activity." They erect useless monuments, call meetings about meetings, open their laptops like priests opening a chalice, all so life cannot flow carefree.

The *not-let-doers* are the border guards of existence. They exist to plant their bodies in thresholds. Their posture says: *Stop. Papers. Authorization. Justification.* They are the clerks, the gatekeepers, the uniformed parasites. They are in the municipal office, stamping "denied." They are the neighbor tapping on your wall because you breathed too loud past midnight. They are the customs agent confiscating the apple in your backpack as if it were plutonium. They are the HR manager who can't let you sit until the ergonomic consultant has approved the chair.

And here's the bastardry: every son-of-a-bitch collaborates with every other son-of-a-bitch, knowingly or not, in this universal project: **to prevent carefree life.** It's their ecological niche. The doers make sure the world is never calm; the not-let-doers make sure no one slips

through the cracks. Together, they form the invisible net that tightens around every throat that dares to laugh.

You'll find them everywhere. In ports, where they keep you waiting because the stamp is missing ink. In parks, where they fine you for lying on the grass. In borders, where they ask, again, the purpose of your visit. In offices and lobbies, where they smile only when blocking your way. They stand at doorways like trolls under bridges, but the toll they demand is not coins—it's your freedom, your breath, your carefree moment.

The Son-of-a-Bitch: eternal, unkillable, self-replicating.
The only species that thrives in bureaucracy like a fish in water.

That's why Nathan devolved. And I mean devolved in the Darwinian sense—down the tree, back through the branches, toward the hairy ancestors who had no mortgages, no bosses, no Excel spreadsheets. He devolved into webcam hustling, his only tool a lens and his only product his own ridicule. Because why not? If the world is populated entirely by sons-of-bitches whose sexual climax is telling others "No," then give them something they can't forbid: *the sight of Nathan, live, unfiltered, unbearable.*

This is the planet's true fetish: not leather, not latex, not feet. Power. Authority. The orgasm comes from saying *forbidden, prohibited, can't be done*. A ban is better than Viagra. A "that's against the rules" is a vibrator in the brain.

And not just the uniformed police (sons-of-bitches emeritus, honorary ACABs since time immemorial). No, the more vicious species are the petty corporals, the janitors of power:

- iStore clerks, guardians of the holy iPhone, who won't let you breathe near a charger without AppleCare+.
- Supermarket cashiers, who scan every bottle with the joy of a customs officer seizing heroin.
- Parking lot guards, fluorescent vest glowing, who wield barriers like medieval lances.
- Building concierges, those sedentary gargoyles of real estate, who live to tell you *"residents only."*

Every single one a corporal.
Every single one greedy for their drop of power.
Every single one clutching their petty authority like Gollum stroking his Precious.

They do nothing but *not let others do.* They breathe to block. They orgasm to forbid. They are the obstacles in human form, the sons-of-bitches in high-vis vests.

And Nathan, stripped of dignity but not of clarity, figured out the only sane response:
If they all get off on *stopping*, then he'll make money by *showing*. By webcam, by lens, by streaming his devolution into primate mockery—because at least in that jungle, the only prohibition is running out of beer.

Corporals, sons-of-bitches, are concentrated entirely on their one true talent: **mediocrity**.

That is their craft, their opus, their cathedral. They polish mediocrity until it shines like brass. They hold it aloft as if it were genius. They gather in committees, in offices, in fluorescent-lit breakrooms, all to ensure that their mediocrity becomes the norm, the law, the default setting of life.

And their greatest fear? **Someone else doing anything.** Because anything, even done half-drunk and upside-down, would by sheer accident come out better than what they've spent their lives "achieving." Which is why they live not to build, not to create, but to block. To sandbag. To smother every spark of initiative under a wet pillow of regulations, forms, permits, signatures.

They know it instinctively: if other people were allowed to *do*, their own *doing* would shrivel

under the comparison. Their castle of mediocrity would collapse in a puff of cheap drywall dust. So they bar the way, they barricade, they forbid, they *not-let-do*. That is the son-of-a-bitch's holy mission.

And you don't have to look far to see them. Just spin around in place. Before you can even pronounce "Indiana Jones," you'll have counted three dozen. At the metro gate, arms crossed. At the post office, eyeing your form. At the university, behind the counter. At the parking lot, wielding a handheld scanner like a sword. A swarm of uniformed gnats, each buzzing their mantra: *No. Not like that. Wrong line. Forbidden. Not allowed.*

They are the banality police, the mediocre militia, the guardians of the nothing.

Sinatra left behind fingerprints so deep they're practically fossils. You can carbon-date half of American culture by the way he hit a note. *"New York, New York"*—nobody dares anymore, because after Sinatra it's karaoke. *"My Way"*—same deal: there's Sinatra's version, then there's a buffet of sad imitations.

But *"In the Wee Small Hours"*? That one's sacred. That's not even a song anymore—it's a cathedral. It's Sinatra peeling open his ribcage at 3 a.m., cigarette glowing, bourbon melting the ice, loneliness dripping from the mic. So sacred that even Tony Bennett—yes, Tony Bennett, the only man who could stand toe-to-toe with Frank in the vocal ring—never touched it. Why? Because he idolized Sinatra too much. Even kings bow in certain chapels.

And yet.

And yet.

Sting. Yes, Sting. Sting with his lute and tantric yoga sessions. Sting decided, during COVID, whisky in hand, in front of a fireplace, to sing *"In the Wee Small Hours."* You can find it on YouTube. It's there, like a crime scene nobody cleaned up.

And you'll watch it.

And you'll cry—not because it's moving, but because some things just shouldn't happen, like watching Mr. Bean step into the ring to spar with Muhammad Ali. "Who greenlit this?" you'll scream. "Who let this man bring his Yoga-meditation voice to Sinatra's funeral dirge?"

Sting, poor bastard, he looks like an alright fella. You can't hate Sting. At worst you blame

him for a few yoga DVDs and singing about Roxanne for the ten thousandth time. He wasn't responsible for *this.* Not fully. At most he tossed the idea out in some whisky-soaked ramble: *"Wouldn't it be nice to honor Frank?"* Then he probably shrugged and went back to tantric stretching.

But someone—*someone*—said yes. Someone in a chair, behind a desk, holding a pen like it was the scepter of God. Someone nodded, smiled, and gave the thumbs up.

Who? Yes. You guessed it. There's only one option.
A corporal.
A Son of a Bitch.

Because that's what corporals do. They don't create, they don't dare, they don't feel the weight of Sinatra's midnight howl. They don't

tremble at the sacredness of "In the Wee Small Hours." They see content. They see ad revenue. They see Sting in front of a fireplace and think: *yes, this will engage the demographic 35-60, whisky-drinkers, jazz-curious, pandemic-lonely.*

It takes a son-of-a-bitch to look at Frank Sinatra's naked soul and say, *"You know what this needs? Sting."*

And so it happens. A corporal greenlights sacrilege. And once it's greenlit, you can't stop it. You can't un-broadcast it. It's out there forever, haunting YouTube, like a bad tattoo on the body of civilization.

Sinatra: buried with dignity.
Sting: dragged out like a karaoke hologram.
The corporal: smoking a cheap cigar, congratulating himself for "content synergy."

That's the chain of crime, Doctor. The fingerprints are all over it. And they all smell of corporals.

Nathan was sobbing. Not metaphorical tears, not poetic mist—actual snot and saltwater streaming down his face after two, maybe three bars of Sting's attempt at *"In the Wee Small Hours."* He slammed his phone down, dove headfirst into Sinatra like a drowning man clinging to driftwood, begging the Chairman of the Board to erase the auditory desecration from his ears.

But here's the filth of human curiosity: even while weeping, Nathan couldn't stop wondering. After all those years of tantric yoga, all those Asian-eastern contortions and stretching retreats, could Sting actually bend himself into that ultimate pose? Could he arch

so far over that he could stick a thumb up his own ass and simultaneously suck on his big toe?

Because that, Nathan realized, would be the truest metaphor for what Sting had attempted: trying to spar with Ali while still tying his own shoelaces together. Or worse—trying to duet with Sinatra while playing kazoo through his rectum.

Nathan hiccuped between sobs, caught between grief and grotesque imagination, Sinatra in one ear, Sting still echoing in phantom form in the other. And he thought: maybe that's the purest definition of a corporal's crime. Forcing you not only to suffer mediocrity but to imagine the acrobatics of its stupidity.

Ding. Another booking. Nathan sighed, clicked accept, and rolled the chair back into its usual spot. He knew the routine: the webcam angled just enough to catch his slumped figure, the cold light of the monitor bleaching the room into morgue white.

He went through the motions — the performance was what they were paying for, after all. A kind of bureaucratic humiliation ritual. The details didn't matter; what mattered was the idea of Nathan "going at it," a man so drained of mystery that he had become living proof of consequences.

The clients weren't fans; they were parents, teachers, moral entrepreneurs. They booked "sessions" for their sons and daughters. The feed would open, Nathan would begin his tired pantomime, and on the other side of the screen a child would scream, slam the laptop shut, swear eternal abstinence.

And that was the service. Not lust, but **lesson**. Not seduction, but **deterrence**.

Nathan, blurry on the screen, had become the new frontier of parenting technology. *"Touch yourself and you'll go blind"* was obsolete; too 1950s, too analog. The 21st-century update was a link and a login.

The call connected.
Thirty seconds in, from the other side:
Wilhelm Scream, then the screen went white—someone had slammed a laptop shut hard enough to reset it. Another successful conversion.

A message popped up from the paying parent:

"He's in the bathroom throwing holy water on himself. Bless you, Mr. Nathan."

Nathan laughed through the cigarette smoke. He was no longer a man; he was a walking

exorcism. The updated proverb was already spreading through suburban chat groups:

“Do that again and I’ll show you Nathan.”

Nathan is the new *Go Blind.* A pixelated bogeyman for the digital age.

The line between men and corporals isn’t philosophical. It’s microscopic. So simple, so clear you could miss it while ordering coffee.

Man walks into a café. Two possible worlds unfold.

Option A:
“Coffee, please.”

Three steps, elegant, human, decent.

1. He asks.
2. The coffee arrives.
3. He says, “Thank you.”

Transaction complete, civility intact, mutual recognition achieved. The man remains a man.

Option B:
“Coffee, thanks.”

That's it. No "please," no request, just "thanks." A pre-emptive gratitude, a declaration of ownership disguised as politeness.
This is the corporal. The one who believes the barista exists solely to complete *his* timeline. In his mind, the coffee is already there, hovering in the metaphysical ether, merely awaiting materialization. The staff? Functionaries. Background characters. NPCs in his caffeine-delivery simulation.

In **Option A**, the man acknowledges another human being.
In **Option B**, the corporal acknowledges only the service rendered by the universe to himself.

That's the difference: humility versus entitlement, existence versus command.

Next time you're in line and you hear someone say *"Coffee, thanks,"* don't turn around. You've just felt a corporal brush past you — one more son-of-a-bitch caffeinated by other people's obedience.

Ding!
Another OnlyFans notification. Another one-to-one call.
Nathan didn't even flinch; routine is routine.

Me (the narrator):
"Oh—sorry. I have to go."

That sound, that little bell, wasn't just a booking; it was a moral siren. This one was a **sodomy call**—the deluxe package, the new parental deterrent campaign.
The updated slogan:

"Do it, and you'll become like them."

And this time it required *me* too.
Because in this world, everyone participates in the farce, sooner or later.

So—
Sorry.
I have to go.
And undress.

Writer: out.